

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1992, JUMADA AL OULA 9, 1413

Emigres boost Jewish, Christian population

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's Christian population increased by 11.6 per cent last year and the Jewish birth rate dropped to a record low, both reflecting the mass immigration from the former Soviet Union, the central bureau of statistics said Tuesday. The former Soviets also emerged as Israel's largest ethnic group with 617,000 people, surpassing the 583,000-strong Moroccan community, according to the bureau's new statistical abstract. Israel's population now totals 5.163 million people, an increase of 2.5 per cent from a year ago, the report said. Of those, 4.226 million (82 per cent) are Jews, 716,000 (13.9 per cent) Muslim, 136,000 (2.4 per cent) Christian and 86,000 (1.7 per cent) druze or others. The Christian population increased a record 11.6 per cent in 1991 compared with 1990, mainly because some 10,000 Christians from the former Soviet Union immigrated with their Jewish relatives, said bureau spokesman David Newman. The increase in the Jewish population was five per cent, he said. The Soviets also brought down the overall Jewish birth rate. The average for immigrant women is fewer than 1.5 children, while the average among Israelis is 2.9 children.

Manic survives no-confidence vote

GRADE (AP) — Premier Milan Manic survived a second no-confidence vote in two months Tuesday, barely hanging onto the power to his conciliatory policies against a barrage of Serb nationalist attacks. The dominant Socialist Party of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic — former communists — accused Mr. Manic of betraying Serbia's cause by advocating peace with rival Croats and Bosnian Muslims (see page 8). A after being roundly defeated in one house of the federal parliament, Manic won a vote in the second house — the Chamber of Republics — margin of 18-17. Twenty-one votes, a majority of the house that is led equally between deputies of Serbia and Montenegro, would have needed to oust him. Mr. Manic, a Serbian-born California millionaire, became prime minister in July. He has pushed the nationalists for reasons to lift economic sanctions against Yugoslavia. The international community sees Mr. Milosevic as stocking aggression by ethnic in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina and earlier in Croatia. The Chamber of Republics is divided between Manic supporters from Montenegro and opponents from Serbia.

Largest Doomsday church to die

SEOUL (AP) — The largest doomsday church in the world said it would close its doors to the faithful because of a prophecy that the end would come in 1993. The church, which had 100,000 members, said it was sorry for creating a false prophecy and for misleading its members by misinterpreting the Bible, said a spokesman. The church, which had been in the news for its prophecy that the world would end in 1993, said it would close its doors to the faithful because of a prophecy that the end would come in 1993. The church, which had 100,000 members, said it was sorry for creating a false prophecy and for misleading its members by misinterpreting the Bible, said a spokesman.

Page 17 Number 5148

Americans pick a president

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Americans voted Tuesday in the largest election in the history of the United States to elect a new president. The election, which was held on November 3, 1992, saw the incumbent President George H.W. Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle, and Senator Ross Perot running against Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, and Senator Ross Perot. The election was held on November 3, 1992, and saw the incumbent President George H.W. Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle, and Senator Ross Perot running against Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, and Senator Ross Perot.

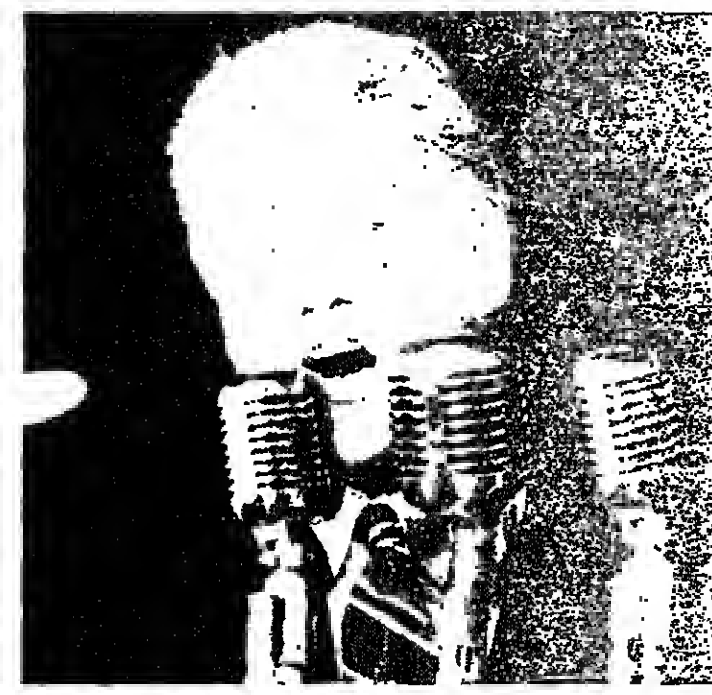
Sinead says Catholic Church is 'anti-Christ'

NEW YORK (AP) — Sinead O'Connor, the Irish singer, said she was "anti-Christ" in a picture she showed on the cover of her new album, "Do You Rock?" The picture showed O'Connor with her arms raised in a gesture of surrender, with the words "I'm sorry" written on her chest. O'Connor said she was "anti-Christ" because she was "anti-war, anti-death, anti-hate, anti-evil, anti-anything that's wrong in the world." She said she was "anti-Christ" because she was "anti-war, anti-death, anti-hate, anti-evil, anti-anything that's wrong in the world." She said she was "anti-Christ" because she was "anti-war, anti-death, anti-hate, anti-evil, anti-anything that's wrong in the world."



Last-minute hustings: (left to right) President George Bush in Madison, New Jersey, independent Ross Perot in Dallas and Democrat Bill Clinton in Philadelphia late Monday (AFP photo)

votes were cast, showed the Democrat with 45 per cent backing among registered voters against 37 for the Republican president and 15 per cent for Mr. Perot. But in this odd and vicious election year, an unusually large 15 per cent of voters said they could still change their minds at the last minute, CBS said. President Bush, who says he is a victim of a hostile media and world recession, vowed as late Monday to win them over and stage the "biggest comeback in the history of American politics." Mr. Bush kept up his attacks on "sick Willie" Clinton as a "tax-and-spend liberal" not to be trusted, and seemed to revel in referring to Mr. Clinton's running mate Al Gore as "ozone man" because of his liberal environmental policies. Jogging in Houston just after dawn Tuesday, Mr. Bush seemed in good spirits and flashed a thumbs-up sign and big smile when asked if he would win. He cast his vote shortly before 9 a.m. EST (1400 GMT) and said he was "very, very pleased" the cut-throat race was finally over. Some saw the election as a presidential battle of the generations — World War II flier Bush against Arkansas Governor Clinton, who like many members of his baby-boom generation had sought to avoid service in Vietnam, a war he thought was wrong, and had experimented with marijuana during college. Mr. Bush ran his campaign on character issues, saying Mr. Clinton was not trustworthy. Mr. Clinton offered a change from the economic policies of Mr. Bush and his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, which Mr. Clinton said had driven America into recession. During the campaign, Mr. Bush took credit for the downfall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and often trumpeted the allies' Gulf war victory over Iraq. But few voters considered international affairs as being of foremost importance. On top of their minds was the faltering economy, an issue Mr. Clinton bit repeatedly. Also being elected Tuesday were a new House of Representatives. A third of the seats in the Senate, the upper house of the bicameral legislature, were also at stake as well as a dozen governorships. In New York City, voters sloged through a rainstorm to be at the polls as soon as they opened at 6 a.m. (1100 GMT). Announcements over loudspeakers in subway stations urged commuters to vote. Mr. Perot, a billionaire from Texas, had been labelled as "crazy" by the Republicans. At his last campaign rally Monday in Dallas, he took the label, with a twist. "There are millions of crazy people in this country," he said of his troops, promising "a crazy day at the polls." Just before noon, Mr. Clinton returned home to Little Rock, stepping off his plane under sunny skies and greeted by a throng of supporters. Hours earlier he had sounded the theme of his campaign. "It's a race of the courage to change against the comfort of the same old failed ideas," Mr. Clinton said late Monday at a rally in McAllen, Texas. All 435 House seats were on the ballot, with more than 120 new faces assured even before the balloting began because of retirements and redistricting. However, the Republicans were expected to make only slight dents in the Democrats' 268-166 margin, with one independent, in the House. Thirty-five of the Senate's 100 seats were being decided as well, with female candidates ahead or competitive in some races. When the Gulf war ended, Republicans had counted on Mr. Bush's coattails to gain a Senate majority. Now, the Republican Party



Last-minute hustings: (left to right) President George Bush in Madison, New Jersey, independent Ross Perot in Dallas and Democrat Bill Clinton in Philadelphia late Monday (AFP photo)

(Continued on page 2)

Nafeer verdict set for Nov. 10

Amman (AP) — The State Security Court in Amman is set to deliver a verdict in the trial of Nafeer al-Hadidi, a Jordanian man accused of involvement in the assassination of a foreign diplomat. The trial is expected to take place on November 10, 1992. Nafeer al-Hadidi is a Jordanian man accused of involvement in the assassination of a foreign diplomat. The trial is expected to take place on November 10, 1992.

Hair cutting ban on rock

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — A ban on rock music and short haircuts has been imposed by the Malaysian government, citing religious and cultural reasons. The ban is part of a series of measures aimed at promoting traditional values and religious observance. The Malaysian government has imposed a ban on rock music and short haircuts, citing religious and cultural reasons. The ban is part of a series of measures aimed at promoting traditional values and religious observance.

Feathers fly in Baghdad

Wellington (AP) — A group of people in Baghdad, Iraq, are protesting against the government's policies. The protesters are demanding reforms and greater political freedom. The group of people in Baghdad, Iraq, are protesting against the government's policies. The protesters are demanding reforms and greater political freedom.

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Arafat appeals for Syrian help

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Yasser Arafat has said Palestinian peace talks with Israel have reached a dead end and called for international protection for his people. The daily Al Safir reported Tuesday. The Beirut newspaper said the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman made the remarks in a letter to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in which he called for a collective Arab effort to deal with the "grave situation." The newspaper, which maintains close links with Syria, published the text of Mr. Arafat's letter to the Syrian leader. In his letter, dated Oct. 15, Mr. Arafat wrote: "I am writing to you regarding the dangers that threaten the peace process. Oct. 30 should have marked the beginning of the transitional period for establishing a self-government for Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories." Mr. Arafat wrote that "deliberate Israeli stalling by former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and now by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has led to a deadlock on the Palestinian track."

Najjab: No progress in peace talks unless Israel changes its attitude

AMMAN — A deadlock continues in the Palestinian-Israeli track of Middle East peace talks as Israel persists in their rejection of a Palestinian demand that would link the proposed transitional period of self-government to a final solution based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, a senior Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said. According to Sulaiman Najjab, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, no progress could be achieved in this track unless the Palestinians extract an Israeli admission of the applicability of U.N. Security Council resolutions that the Palestinian territories taken over by Israel in 1967 are "occupied territories" not just "territories" as Israel refers to them. In an interview with the Jordan Times, Mr. Najjab also said that establishing the applicability of 242 would solve another point of contention over the "geographic jurisdiction" of the proposed Palestinian interim government. According to Mr. Najjab, Israel is defining the geographic jurisdiction within the framework of Palestinian autonomy as being one over territories under Israeli military rule, rather than territories occupied in 1967, which would exclude Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank. "The Israelis want us to accept a definition which would force us to give away more than half of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967," Mr. Najjab said, adding that "we will not give up Jerusalem."

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Clinton says he plans to reverse Bush's 'pro-Arab bias' if elected

DUBAI (R) — U.S. presidential candidate Bill Clinton was quoted Tuesday as saying a democratic administration would distance the U.S. from what he described as the pro-Arab policies of President George Bush. The London-based Arabic newspaper Al Sharq Al Awsat said Mr. Clinton made the remarks in an interview it was jointly publishing with a French magazine, Politique Internationale. He appeared to take a hardline against lucrative U.S. arms deals with Arab states such as Saudi Arabia that are strongly opposed by Israel's friends in the U.S. Congress. "I will study each arms deal based on two criteria: First the deal should not influence in any way Israel's military supremacy and second we should respect the arms reduction process in the area," Mr. Clinton said. "The international community has to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling not only in the hands of the Iranian, but also the Iraqis and Libyans... because giving missiles to a dictatorial regime will be an explosive element," he said. Mr. Clinton said that if he were elected president the U.S. policy towards Iraqi President Saddam Hussein would not change. "Saddam has to understand that regardless of who is in the White House he has to abide by all the United Nations resolutions," he said. Asked about improving U.S. relations with Syria, Mr. Clinton did not reply directly but said: "We paid a high price for the administration's policy of embracing Saddam Hussein and we should not make the same mistake again." Washington supported Iraq in his eight-year war against Iran and has considerably improved relations with Syria since Damascus joined the U.S.-led alliance against Iraq in the Gulf war and took part in the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace talks. In the full text of the interview published by the French quarterly Politique Internationale, Mr. Clinton strongly criticised Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. "The tyranny he exercises in his own country and the occupation of Lebanon by his troops, as well as the constant support he gives to terrorism, should lead us to be more prudent in our relations with him, Mr. Clinton was quoted as saying."

Rabin: Partial pullout from Golan inevitable for peace with Syria

ORTAL, Golan Heights (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told Jewish settlers on the occupied Golan Heights Tuesday that Israel must return some land to Syria to secure a peace treaty. Several hundred protesters opposed to any withdrawal stood outside kibbutz Ortal as Mr. Rabin told those inside that Israel must pursue the current Middle East peace talks in Washington. "We have two choices — to live by the sword or to try to achieve peace," Mr. Rabin said. "It is possible to achieve peace with all of the Golan?" Mr. Rabin asked. "In my opinion, no." However, Mr. Rabin emphasised he did not want a complete withdrawal, from the strategic plateau that Israel seized from Syria in 1967. The Golan overlooks land stretching to Damascus in the north and Israel's Sea of Galilee in the west. "We are ready for a withdrawal of IDF (Israel defence forces) forces from the Golan but we'll not define the dimensions until we know that is real peace," Mr. Rabin said.

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Coalition crisis ends

Mr. Rabin's coalition defeated four no-confidence motions Monday, carrying the 16-week-old government safely through its first political crisis. A bitter dispute between Mr. Rabin's two coalition partners, the religious Shas Party and the left-wing Meretz bloc, was settled a few hours before opposition parties presented four motions of no-confidence in the government. The agreement cleared the way for the government to defeat the motions in two ballots of 59-51. The six Shas legislators boycotted the vote in the 120-seat parliament. Four other legislators were absent. Presenting a separate no-confidence motion by the right-

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Home News

Iraq papers Cabinet approves trade agreement with OIC

S. Agriculture Secretary Mr. H. Al-Sayid, Minister of the House of Representatives, endorsed the recommendation of the Agriculture Committee on a draft agreement between member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the trade of agricultural products. The agreement was signed in Rome last week, and the OIC's Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation, which the Agriculture Committee is a part of, endorsed it. The agreement provides for the promotion of trade between member states of the OIC, and the Agriculture Committee is responsible for its implementation. The agreement also provides for the promotion of trade between member states of the OIC, and the Agriculture Committee is responsible for its implementation. The agreement also provides for the promotion of trade between member states of the OIC, and the Agriculture Committee is responsible for its implementation.

King honours Malaysian Chief of Staff

KING HONOURS MALAYSIAN CHIEF OF STAFF: His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday conferred upon visiting Malaysian Chief of Staff General Tan Sri Yacob Ben Mohammad the Military Merit Medal of the First Order. King Hussein received Gen. Ben Mohammad in a special audience attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Fathi Abu Taleb, and Chief of Staff of the Royal Jordanian Air Force Lt. General Ihsan Shurudum. Gen. Ben Mohammad conveyed to King Hussein the best wishes of the Malaysian monarch. The King voiced satisfaction with the level of existing bilateral relations, and requested Gen. Ben Mohammad to convey his best wishes to the king and people of Malaysia.

Mitterrand to come with 'ideas' for peace, claims ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — French President Francois Mitterrand's scheduled visit to Jordan this month aims to push forward the Middle East peace process, French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Bauchard said Tuesday in an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra. Mr. Bauchard said that the French president's visit to Jordan and other countries in the region at the end of the month is part of comprehensive efforts to boost the Middle East peace talks through proposing certain ideas with the objective of achieving a just and comprehensive peace. The ambassador said Mr. Mitterrand's visit comes in response to an invitation extended to him by His Majesty King Hussein, who has special relations with the French president. These special relations between the two leaders have helped boost Franco-Jordanian relations; "President Mitterrand's visit also clearly demonstrates Jordan's key role in the peace process," he said.

Queen attends children's contest

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Noor attended Monday a contest for children's creative production held to honour the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The contest was held at the Jordanian Cultural Centre, and the Queen presided over the ceremony. The contest was held to honour the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The contest was held at the Jordanian Cultural Centre, and the Queen presided over the ceremony. The contest was held to honour the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The contest was held at the Jordanian Cultural Centre, and the Queen presided over the ceremony.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and daily A-bic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed and place with the concerned institutions.

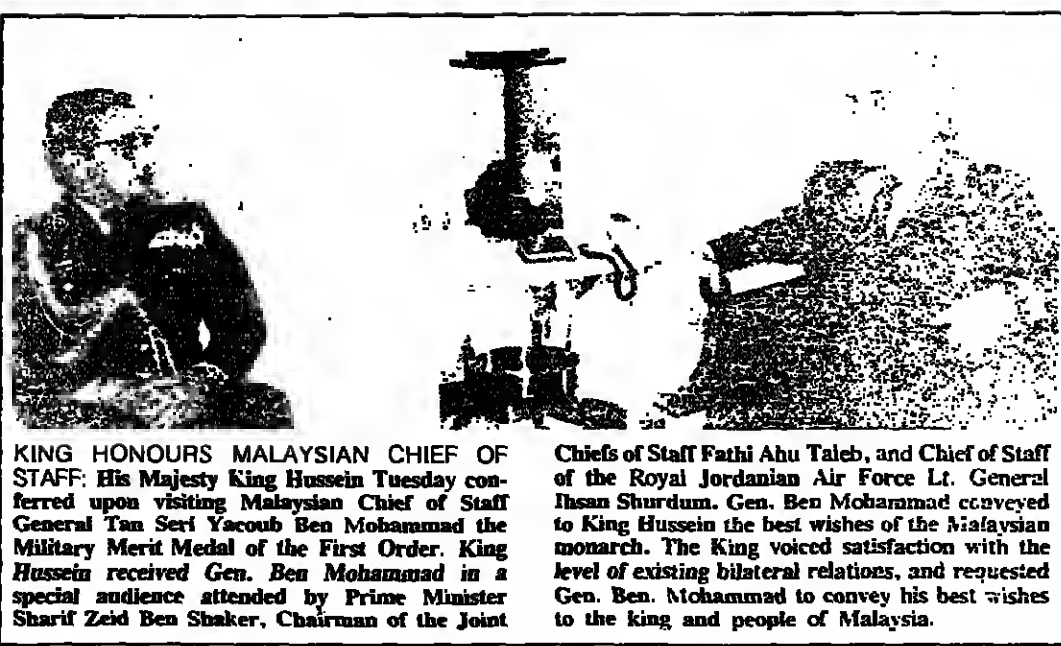
EXHIBITIONS
Exhibition of oil paintings by Jordanian artist Omar Hamdan at Alia Art Gallery.
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3M announces new company in Gulf

Mr. Stacca said the new company would be operational "very soon." Initially as a small project management team drawing together solution development experts from those partner companies. Gulf Business Machines, also based in Bahrain, provides services and support to IBM distributors in nine Middle East States, while Saudi Business Machines is IBM's sole representative in Saudi Arabia.

MUTAH UNIVERSITY

Applicants are invited for mechanical engineering at Muthah University within the following conditions:
1. Holder of mechanical engineering diploma of Al-Tawjili certificate/scientific branch.
2. Continuous experience of at least five years in the field of design and execution of mechanical works or buildings with concentration on air-conditioning.
3. A good command of the English language is a must.
Applications are to be sent not later than November 10th, 1992 to the Presidential Office, Muthah University, fax 654061 or to Muthah University Liaison Office, Jabal Amman, between 3rd and 4th Circles, behind Zahran Palace.



Jordan tells U.N. Palestinian issue must be resolved politically

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's permanent representative to the United Nations Adnan Abu Odeh Monday said that the Palestinian refugee problem is primarily a political issue which resulted in a humanitarian tragedy. In an address to the Special Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly, Abu Odeh stressed the inseparable relation between the political and humanitarian dimensions of the Palestinian refugees. The creation of a special committee on refugees emanating from the multilateral talks between Arab and Israeli delegations is indicative of the importance of the political dimension of the Palestinian question, Mr. Abu Odeh said.

UNRWA calls for Palestinian solution

AMMAN (J.T.) — UNRWA Commissioner-General Ilter Turkmen presented his Annual Report on the work of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees to the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly in New York on Monday which stated that a solution to the Palestine question was "urgently needed."

New UNRWA registration cards to be issued to Palestinian refugees

By Lima Nabli
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) has embarked on the distribution of new registration cards for almost 2.7 million Palestinians according to Denis Brown director of UNRWA Affairs in Jordan. In a statement to the Jordan Times, Mr. Brown said the old cards used to hold two categories, namely R and N. Refugees under R category are Palestinians who are living in UNRWA's area of operation who do not earn sufficient income to support themselves and their dependants. Refugees registered under category N are Palestinians who were not living in the agency's area of operation, and earn sufficient income.

Child care training course begins at Al Bashir hospital

AMMAN (Petra) — A training course for doctors on safe motherhood and birth spacing started Tuesday at Al Bashir government hospital in Amman. Fifteen doctors from various parts of the Kingdom are taking part in the week-long course which is organized by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Health Minister Aref Bataineh delivered an address at the opening ceremony in which he said that safe motherhood and birth spacing are important in basic health care programmes because they tackle two major problems: the rise in mortality rates of both mothers and infants. Dr. Bataineh said the ministry is providing health care for mothers and children at 230 mother and child care centres all over the Kingdom, adding that the ministry encourages delivering babies under the supervision of doctors or certified midwives. "We have achieved a tangible progress in this field, where the percentage of deliveries under medical supervision reached 75 per cent," he said.

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Jordan Times

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Good morning Mr. President

BY THE time the Middle East wakes up this morning, the results of the U.S. presidential elections will be all known and appreciated. In a way the peoples of the world have got used to poll projections about Bill Clinton being favoured by the Americans as the next U.S. president. Whether the morning news will confirm this projection is another matter despite the fact that the gap between Clinton and the incumbent president was widening instead of contracting as the race for the White House was winding up late Monday night, American standard time. In this sense all the excitement usually associated with the election of the president of the U.S. is all exhausted. By today, the peoples and countries of the Middle East will start assessing how the election of the next president in Washington is going to affect their lives and future. Uppermost on the minds of the peoples and governments of the region is how the peace process is going to fare under the leadership of a new chief executive at the White House. From the looks of things it will be some time before the fallouts of the Tuesday elections is digested and calculated. The sceptics of the peace negotiations would probably feel at ease at the prospect of an interruption in the peace talks. They never wanted the peace process to get off the ground in the first place. Status quo for them is a bliss and if the much dreaded peace parleys can be jettisoned by the results of the new presidential elections in the country that brokered the peace process, so be it. To be sure there are forces on both sides of the fence that would welcome any slowdown in the peace talks. That is why the new occupier of the White House must hasten to pronounce himself and his administration on the future of the peace negotiations. All the countries of the world have a stake in the ongoing peace efforts and the White House should associate itself with this sentiment as soon as possible. Even before officially taking the oath of office in January, the next president must make a policy statement outlining his commitment to the continuous campaign for peace in the Middle East. There is every hope that that will happen soon and most probably before the resumption of the peace talks in Washington on Nov. 9. As to the effects of the presidential elections on other international conflicts and issues, one also awaits the early pronouncements of the next president with great deal of anticipation. On the top of the list of course is the Yugoslav conflict and the famine in Somalia and Sudan. The world, thanks to CNN, has really become a global village, and thanks or no thanks to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the seat of the U.S. president and his role in world politics has grown larger and larger. Whether it is Bush or Clinton, the next U.S. president needs to appreciate that the world is waiting for his actions and pronouncements. Because whether we like or not, the U.S. is modern day sole superpower and whatever policies it adopts or actions it takes are bound to affect people everywhere.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

WE FOOL no one but ourselves if we say that the American consciousness and its moral and spiritual values will determine the winner of the U.S. presidential elections, the Arabic daily Al Ra'i said in an editorial Tuesday. The U.S. is not an old country whose values and traditions developed for thousands of years. It is not the East, where monotheistic religions were revealed and it is not the Europe of history and civilisation, the paper said. The United States, it said, is a country made of the worst that other societies could offer: of immigrants escaping the justice of their countries, and of fortune-hunters who sought wealth at any material or moral cost. Accordingly, said Al Ra'i, the U.S. administration have mostly been governed in their policies by this worst example of human societies. Slaughtering, starving, and bombing other peoples have always been American acts justified by a racist American desire. The paper said that the history of the United States is one of massacres carried out against others. It is not strange, therefore, that an American president takes pride in slaughtering an Arab people to satisfy cheap lust, in denying Arab children food and milk to fulfil beastly desires, and in denying medicine to Arab patients so that to watch them die of pain, the paper said. It will not be surprising if Americans elect President George Bush (for a second term) because a murderous society always chooses a murderer to lead it, it said. Such are the values that have guided Mr. Bush since he became president and this explains his happiness in seeing millions fight in Eastern Europe, millions suffering in Iraq and other places, the paper added. We wish the fall of Mr. Bush because we want to see a murderer stop accusing others of terrorism, while he practices it, of racism, while he exercises it and of being uncivilised, while his deeds bring to mind, the images of all murders, beginning with Huloq (a Mongol leader who invaded Baghdad in 1258), the paper went on saying. Both the old and the new Huloq left behind nothing but shame for themselves and for the people who chose them as leaders.

ALSO COMMENTING on the American presidential elections, Al Dustour Arabic daily expressed its indifference to the outcome of the elections because, it said, all candidates support Israel. We cannot sympathise with any of the candidates because they all are trying to win the Jewish vote and are promising continued support for Israel, the paper said.

Economic Forum

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

More of the currency talk

During the last three months we have been advising the readers here and in other forums to stick to their U.S. dollars and even to buy more of them with their other foreign currency holdings, if they have any. The dollar has been picking up nicely. But by how much?

The dollar has, of course, a price against each and every other currency. However, when columnists and analysts talk about a rise or fall in that price, they have in mind its price versus major convertible currencies, namely the Deutsch mark, pound sterling, French franc and Japanese yen. To these, one may add the Swiss franc and Canadian dollar.

A major recent shift in international currency markets has been taking place since Sept. 16, the so-called Black Wednesday. During the last two months, September and October, the dollar rose around 27.3 per cent against the sterling, 10 per cent against the French franc, 10.6 per cent against the mark, 11 per cent against the Swiss franc and 0.5 per cent against the yen. The variation in these ratios is wide to the extent that it is inaccurate to gauge the rise or drop in the value of the dollar with reference to a single currency, although this is exactly what we commonly do in our daily talks and conversations.

It is neither correct to say that the dollar rose by a percentage equal to the arithmetic mean of the above ratios, that is by 12 per cent in the above example, because the volume of economic activity between the United States and each of the countries of these currencies (Germany, Japan, United Kingdom, France and Switzerland) is different and thus the importance, or weight, of each exchange rate rise (or drop) is different.

To illustrate, imagine a situation where the United States deals only with one country, say, Germany. In this case, what totally matters is how much the dollar soars or drops against the mark. If it rises by, say, 20 per cent then we should address ourselves to this increase; we say that the dollar rose by 20 per cent even

though it might plunge against each and every other currency. The correct specification of the movement of the dollar, or any other currency, should not therefore be stated with reference to the arithmetic mean of its increases or decreases versus other currencies, but to a mean that takes into account the volume of the economic activity between the United States and other countries. Under the familiar data limitations, the best proxy for that volume is external trade which is very well quantified and documented among all countries. Thus, the above-mentioned increases in the exchange rate of the dollar against the major currencies are weighted by the volume of the American trade with the countries of these currencies to arrive at what is termed the "trade weighted" rise in the exchange rate of the dollar.

In Jordan, the dinar is linked, more or less, with the U.S. dollar. When the dollar advances (or retreats) by, say, five steps against major currencies, the dinar simultaneously rises (or drops) four steps. During the last two months, September and October, the Jordan dinar dropped 2.3 per cent against the dollar but improved by 8.2 per cent against other major currencies traded in our foreign exchange market.

Because of the very close link between the greenback and the Jordanian currency, the widely anticipated improvement in the dollar during the next twelve months makes the holding of dinar balances relatively safe (as the dinar will be appreciating with the dollar). We certainly believe that this is a very opportune time for those who have borrowed in the Jordanian dinar and are therefore paying a debt service rate of 10-13 per cent to convert their foreign currency holdings into the dinar and settle their overdrafts or even to hold them on their own. Those borrowers should not be apprehensive about the depreciation of the dinar as the possibility of such depreciation is completely out of question, at least during the next 12 months.

American society still lacks the will to kick the oil addiction

By Nick Kotz and Rick Young

WASHINGTON — In December 1990, as America moved towards war in the Gulf, President George Bush's top advisers met at the White House to shape his proposed energy plan. Brent Scowcroft, listed with growing dismay as the cabinet rejected measure after measure to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil. Finally he asked in frustration, "What are we fighting this war for, anyway?"

No one answered, Mr. Scowcroft's question remains pertinent in light of the energy legislation passed by Congress last month, and soon to be signed by President Bush. Although the legislation takes modest steps to promote energy efficiency and alternative fuels, remarkably it will leave America more, not less, dependent on Gulf oil in the years ahead.

Three times in less than 20 years, the U.S. economy has been rocked by oil shocks that resulted from wars or revolutions in the Middle East. And its vulnerability is increasing. Oil imports are expected to rise from about 50 per cent today to as much as 70 per cent of total oil needs by 2010.

The United States has 5 per cent of the world's population yet consumes 25 per cent of its energy. Infatuation with fossil fuels is poisoning the planet. With America's environment, economy and national security at stake, why did this administration and Congress, like previous ones, fail to tackle the energy problem decisively?

The failure this time around began with a divided Bush administration lacking conviction and a sense of urgency. Early

attempts by Energy Secretary James Watkins to forge a national energy agenda met stiff resistance from a White House unwilling to accept a larger government role in energy policy and opposed to any actions that required taxes or interfered with the "free market."

Still, others within the administration believed that decisive action was needed. As the Iraqi army rolled across Kuwait, a heated battle developed between the defense establishment and the president's economic advisers. Internal administration documents show that the Defense and State departments fought vigorously for virtually every measure that would reduce dependence on foreign oil, including an increased gasoline tax, higher auto fuel efficiency standards and an expanded Strategic Petroleum Reserve. But at the urging of his economic advisers, the president rejected each of these options.

The Bush plan was received by a Congress equally divided and equally unsuccessful in charting a new course on energy. The environmental lobby opposed opening the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling, and the auto industry opposed increased fuel mileage standards. They killed any bill with either provision.

With billions of dollars in business at stake, the usual collection of energy lobbies cashed in. The auto, nuclear and oil industries have pumped \$45 million into congressional campaign coffers since 1985.

The auto industry defeated fuel efficiency increases that could save 2 million barrels of oil a day. And the nuclear industry won an easier plant licensing process as part of the government's attempt to bring nuclear power back in a big way.

The oil industry successfully fended off efforts to replace a

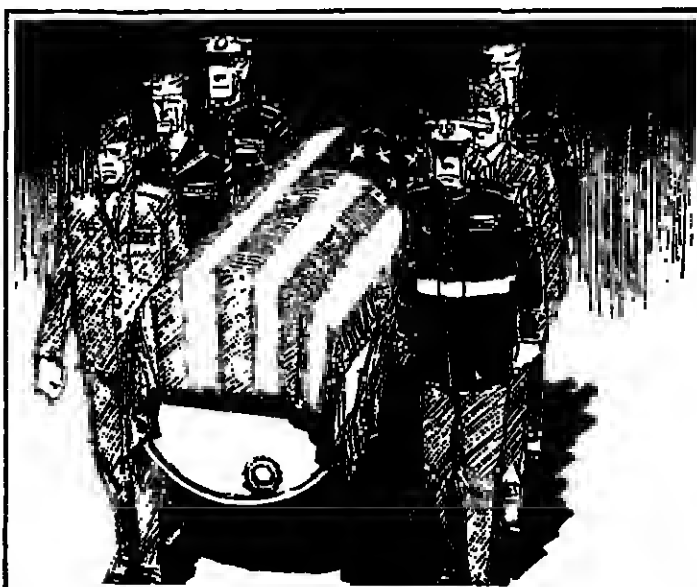
portion of gasoline sales with alternative fuels. And the auto industry eviscerated requirements for large vehicle fleets to run on these alternatives.

So now the legislation's "centro-piece" for reducing oil dependency will cut imports by less than 1 per cent.

The committees that set energy policies are stacked with members representing the traditional energy players, like the oil, coal, nuclear and auto industries. These members represent their constituents' parochial interests, not necessarily the national interest. Even a proposal to increase the size of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve through a half-cent per gallon tax on gasoline was defeated by Congress. Here opposition came from the Bush administration, the oil industry and politicians fearful of voting for any tax increase. This oil reserve, now 570 million barrels stored in Texas and Louisiana, is America's first line of defense against another devastating cutoff. When politicians fear that voters will not support even a fractional gas tax increase, the full dimensions of the inability to act come into sharp focus.

Meanwhile, the environment is becoming more polluted and the addiction to oil remains unabated. There will be more turmoil in the Middle East. Few experts believe that the United States will be as lucky as the last time, when American casualties were relatively few and the oil shock was short-lived.

The real question in Washington today is how to go beyond business as usual. To do that, the American people must recognise that too often they confuse their special interests with the good of the country — the Washington Post.



Election eve question in Tokyo: Who knows Bill Clinton?

By Michael Hirsh
The Associated Press

TOKYO — In the capital of America's No. 1 economic rival, the biggest growth industry these days is Bill Clinton.

The Finance Ministry has sent emissaries deep into Arkansas seeking information. Foreign Ministry officials are making lunch dates with the few Japanese who've broken bread with him. Businessmen are casting their minds back 12 years for wispy memories of Democratic contacts.

The old Tokyo-to-Washington game of back-door lobbying — a practice criticised by both Mr. Clinton and challenger Ross Perot — has begun afresh, spurred by fears of a new administration full of unknowns.

"Many American lobbyists are approaching Japanese companies, saying they are very well connected to Democrats," said Yukio Okamoto, a Japanese diplomat turned consultant on U.S.-Japan relations.

In a country where personal relationships count far more than official channels, what's cause the most unease is that almost no one here knows much about Mr. Clinton or his advisers.

The powerful Finance Ministry has sent secret emissaries to the Clinton camp, "but there are so many people around him it was

hard to know who to talk to," complained one official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

One of those seeking to build ties with Mr. Clinton for Japan is Michael C. Mallen, a retired U.S. Navy intelligence officer. He was recently dispatched to Arkansas and Washington by his boss, Takujiro Hamada, a legislator close to Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa.

"It was solely for the purpose of getting acquainted," Mr. Mallen said Thursday upon returning. "If in the future we have to do business, we'll have some people we know and can call on the phone."

Though Mr. Clinton's election is not yet certain, the change in attitude towards him since earlier this year has been dramatic.

Only last February, reflecting the traditional Japanese view that Republicans are good for open markets while Democrats favour protectionism, an official with the economic planning agency wrote in a leading journal that Japan had to do all it could to get Mr. Bush reelected.

Today, it's difficult to find a Japanese in government who can't find something good to say about the front-runner.

"He was an outstanding person," said legislator Kazuo Aichi about his meeting with Mr. Clinton at a governors' conference.

"Even though he was young, I had the impression he was a real leader."

Much of the pro-Clinton sentiment appears genuine, a feeling that the Democrat will do better at regenerating the U.S. economy, which is Japan's biggest market and underpins America's role as Japan's military protector.

"The Japanese realise they can't sell VCRs to the homeless," said Thomas Zengge, a Tokyo management consultant and Republican who has joined the Clinton campaign.

"Also, a bad economy just makes the U.S. more strident on trade issues," he said. "Lately, Japanese at the CEO level are telling me they think Clinton would be better for the economy."

Perhaps the biggest hope is that Mr. Clinton, as the first U.S. president born after World War II, will represent a leap beyond the cold war stance of treating Japan as a very junior diplomatic partner.

Another man with a busy telephone is Yuji Yaegashi, sole representative in the Arkansas State Office in Tokyo. He said he had had dozens of calls from business, media and government "trying to find a human pipeline who knows him."

Mr. Clinton hasn't been to Tokyo since September 1988,

when he and fellow governors from Louisiana and Mississippi came seeking investment for their hard-up southern states. Mr. Clinton then, and Mr. Yaegashi said some officials now ask him, "did we meet him then?"

"They always ask, 'do you think Gov. Clinton likes Japan?' I tell them yes, especially his education system."

Trade, however, is another matter. With Japan's surplus heading for a record this year, "the Japan-U.S. relationship is going to head through a stormy period again, whoever gets elected," said Mr. Okamoto.

Japan is clearly concerned by some of Clinton's positions: His support for economic sanctions on trade, his advocacy of an economic Security Council, and his proposal that overseas corporations in the United States be taxed more.

Also worrisome is his proposal to crack down on former U.S. officials who lobby for foreign interests.

Mr. Okamoto said he has been advising Japanese companies not to try to set up back-door channels to a Clinton administration. "It is wrong for Japanese companies to look for preferential treatment," he said. "If they are doing normal and honourable business, they shouldn't worry."

Arab reconciliation: The case for democracy

By Ayman Al Safadi

TO JORDANIAN and other Arab officials, the visit of King Hassan II of Morocco to the region last week achieved a qualified success. "There were positive indications that everybody is interested in Arab reconciliation," one Jordanian official said.

The Moroccan monarch was leading an effort to heal the rift among Arab countries, that would have been crowned by the convening of an Arab summit where Arab leaders would bury grudges of the past.

The call for the summit has not been made: grounds upon which reconciliation would proceed have not been revealed; and Arab masses will once again be forced to follow as a fait accompli the decisions of their leaders.

Reconciliation among Arab countries is a popular demand, a crucial necessity without which the Arab World will continue to be a marginal entity in a world increasingly dominated by regional groups forging closer alliances.

But an Arab rapprochement based on the edifices of the past, achieved through the tenants of tribal culture and subject to the whims of individuals is something we are better off without. Such reconciliation, like many similar "achievements" in the past, will prolong the life of the shaky foundations upon which the Arab system is based.

The current division in the Arab World is often blamed on the Gulf war and the conflicting stands which various Arab countries and politics adopted in handling it. This is a superficial assessment. The disarray of the Arab World has its roots in more fundamental aspects of our political, social, and economic systems; in the very structure of the Arab World.

Less than one decade away from the 21st century, millions of Arabs are still governed by autocratic regimes that run their countries the way their ancestors ruled their tribes. Blinded by absolute power, most of the ruling elite refused to respond to the realities of the time, failing to erect the political and social mechanisms necessary to cope with an increasingly interdependent, more challenging modern world.

When crisis erupted, many Arab leaders failed the test. Their regimes proved bankrupt. National interests were sacrificed for individual ambitions and the survival of the few was placed over the well-being of the majority. The failure of Arab leaders to construct a regional structure through which to deal with potential conflicts came back to haunt them.

It is in this context that any talk of new Arab reconciliation, should be assessed.

Unless the lessons of the war guide the process, any of ranks will further imperil our future and our nation's interests. And unless the past is used to learn the success of the future, the system that has crippled growth, jeopardised our unity and compromised our time, a nation will continue to backward, away from social and economic development.

Arab masses should be reconciled if it fails to be the root causes of the antagonism. It is their knowledge that qualifies the acts of today to be the acts of tomorrow. And it is their demand that Arab leaders them ample reason to law in the status quo that is going to create.

Reconciliation should be approached with pragmatism should foster co-operative mechanisms and regional structures invulnerable to the of individuals and equip institutions that can cope a demands of a complicated world. It should lead to ten agreements on border environment, economic situation, labour movement, above all, respect for rights and individual freedom.

Unless Arab regimes capable of charting such a rationalised path for the new Arab order that upholds the interests of the nation, Arab reconciliation will be at best, underestimates, and completely disregards, the rights and interests of the Arab people.

This, unfortunately, does seem attainable at present.

As the Gulf war demonstrates, totalitarian regimes and cannot honour such commitments. Their persons are bound to conflict the needs of their people's progress of their societies.

The ultimate goal of the Arab world is the attainment of progress in the of man, equality for all, therefore an innate contradiction between hopes for progress Arab World and the totalitarian political system that continue to draft its

Institutionalised democratic precondition for regional development and successful nation. Unfortunately, less than a handful of Arab governments seem to acknowledge this fact.

That said, there is hope to achieve Arab reconciliation in that light, the Moroccan diplomacy is no reason for optimism.

The writer is a Jordanian staff member.

LETTERS

Nobody stops them

To the Editor:

AFTER RETURNING from a trip to the U.S. I have read newspaper articles or heard radio and TV news concerning the severe traffic problems and accidents in Jordan. After hearing that there is even a club, one can join, solely for study and prevention of car accidents in Jordan, I felt motivated to write.

When I was in the U.S. I got behind the wheel to drive automatically went into my Jordanian mode of driving, expect every driver to do everything wrong and break every rule they could. It did NOT happen! Virtually everyone was following the laws and driving was a pleasure (even in a large city). I mean Americans are more intelligent or at least more abiding? The answer is an absolute no.

Americans drive safely and follow the laws because they are forced to. If one breaks a traffic law in the U.S., there are policemen consistently on duty to give the driver a BIG fine or black mark on his/her license. In most states, after three marks in one year a driver loses his/her license. The only way to regain the license is to attend a special school for bad drivers. During the school classes, students are given lessons in driving safely but they are also shown videos of real car accidents being pulled out of their wrecked vehicles. After the bad complete their school classes they are tested very carefully. It takes a year's time to regain a lost license. If a driver/he/she faces a huge fine and possibly a jail sentence. (There is enough space to describe what happens to a driver who is arrested while under the influence of alcohol).

My whole point is: Drivers in Jordan drive carelessly, foolishly because nobody stops them. (A JD5 fine for speeding won't stop anyone, but a JD150 fine has an effect).

After witnessing the wonderful way Jordanians warmly welcome His Majesty King Hussein home and also to raise the new cancer centre, I feel the Jordanian family tremendous strength and power. With the correct guidance help, Jordanians can unite to have good, efficient, and fair law enforcement. We can stop the terrible waste and destruction of the horns very soon on this issue. I am the first in line to fight this very real problem.

M. Sakjikh
P.O. Box 15
Amman.

Reconciliation: Peer verdict on Tuesday

Al Safadi

Unless the less... of ranks will... future and... interests. And... the past is... success of the... system that... growth, jeop... and comprom... that's personal... backward, away... social and co... ment.

Arab masses... reconciliation... root causes... antagonism. It... to establish... of today to... tomorrow. And... charges against... demand that... them ample... in the statu... going to create.

Reconciliation... should foster... mechanisms and... Mr. Hadid said. "Therefore,

Arabic masses... reconciliation... root causes... antagonism. It... to establish... of today to... tomorrow. And... charges against... demand that... them ample... in the statu... going to create.

Reconciliation... should foster... mechanisms and... Mr. Hadid said. "Therefore,

points:

— Regarding the charges that Mr. Shbeilat undermined Jordanian-Iraqi relations, Mr. Hadid said that the prosecution did not submit any evidence to prove that Mr. Shbeilat had done anything to "pose an aggressive threat to the Kingdom."

(The prosecution had accused Mr. Shbeilat and Sheikh Qarrash of providing information to the Iraqi opposition on information about the Amireyah shelter in Baghdad which was bombed by the U.S. Air Force during the Gulf war. Hundreds of civilians were killed in the raid).

— On charges of slander against members of Parliament, Mr. Hadid insisted that such charges can only be pressed by those who have been slandered and not by state prosecutors and that in legal terms "slander" has to take place in public or in the media to be established as such.

Wiretapped telephone conversations containing what a sound engineer identified as Mr. Shbeilat's voice cursing members of Parliament are the evidence produced by the prosecution to support the slander charge.

Mr. Hadid described wiretapping

as unconstitutional and said the privacy of telephone calls could not be violated.

— "Charges of slander against His Majesty the King has to be in the form of a written letter or verbal message addressed to the King, or in the form of a picture or drawing that touches the dignity of His Majesty, and publicising it," Mr. Hadid said referring to the last charge against Mr. Shbeilat.

The prosecution produced a small

photo album confiscated from Mr. Shbeilat's office, which was said to have had pictures of ruined homes and well-known sayings by King Hussein. A police officer testified that the writings on the photo album belonged to Mr. Shbeilat, but the defence had then tried to establish that the writings were that of "Sami Al Ajrab, a citizen with a complaint."

Sheikh Qarrash's lawyer, in his 13-page summation, focused on the following and made these demands:

— To disregard the testimonies of the witnesses who were at the time being held at the General Intelligence Department (GID) in connection with another case;

— The document that outlines the aims of the organisation was not in Sheikh Qarrash's handwriting, nor was it signed by him;

— That the court disregard information gained from the wiretapped phone conversation and cited constitutional rights and the privacy

act.

The lawyer sought to discredit the testimony of the "sound expert" who identified Sheikh Qarrash's voice, citing that it was the first time he was asked to analyse the voices on tapes and the first "expert" testimony.

He also argued that the explosives found in the possession of the third and fourth defendants were for use inside the occupied territories, and that all the witnesses had testified to this effect.

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What the other	12 Land: abbr.	45	BORE	BORE	ON
melon repaid	13 (Montana)	46	BORE	BORE	ON
Popeye's love	21 Sautou	47	BORE	BORE	ON
Part of GEO	22 Aholer	48	BORE	BORE	ON
Asker	23 Tater	49	BORE	BORE	ON
accessory	24 Euterpe's	50	BORE	BORE	ON
Victory goddess	25 Euterpe's	51	BORE	BORE	ON
subject	26 Whimpers	52	BORE	BORE	ON
Traffic jam	27 Run -- of	53	BORE	BORE	ON
Hessian river	30 Mother-of-pearl	54	BORE	BORE	ON
Po source	32 Syrian	55	BORE	BORE	ON
	33 Orderly	56	BORE	BORE	ON
DOWN	34 Moscow's moote	57	BORE	BORE	ON
Alan Alda hut	35 Warehouse	58	BORE	BORE	ON
Chair choice	36 machine	59	BORE	BORE	ON
Shore	37 More	60	BORE	BORE	ON
Rhythms	38 Majority	61	BORE	BORE	ON
Card suit	40 Wind	62	BORE	BORE	ON
Raza		63	BORE	BORE	ON
Straitghened		64	BORE	BORE	ON

Japanese banks to set up private bailout company

The plan provided no details on how many banks would participate and how much debt they would eventually sell, raising doubts about the financial feasibility of the venture.

This has never been done before. We won't know until we give it a try," Mr. Wakai said.

Some bankers and ministry officials privately are skeptical

about the willingness of stronger banks to anie up a larger share of the costs to save their troubled competitors.

"Deep in their hearts, everyone expects the government to help out" in the end, said Kathy Matsui, an analyst at Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

Japan's minimal disclosure laws and its narrow official definition of nonperforming loans have tended to obscure the actual severity of the financial crisis, making an assessment of the

Industry analysts' estimates of bad loans average around 30 trillion yen (\$244 billion). But even the much lower official estimates far exceed the government's deposit insurance account of 696 billion yen (\$5.48 billion).

Pakistan hopes for joint ventures in Central Asia

Soviet Union were valued at 1.51 billion rupees (\$60 million) in 1991/92 compared with imports of 3.55 billion rupees (\$140 million).

In July and August, after separate figures began to be compiled, Pakistan exported 1.7 million rupees (\$68,000) worth of goods to Uzbekistan and 1.8 million worth to Tajikistan.

Communications and trade through troubled Afghanistan, which divides Pakistan from the former Soviet states, were the

In July, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan signed an accord to study ways of building transport routes, including railway lines, linking the three countries.

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Rebel Caucasian leader accuses Russian president of colonialism

MOSCOW (R) — Tension simmered in Russia's volatile south on Tuesday as a rebel Caucasian leader accused President Boris Yeltsin of resorting to dangerous, colonial tactics to stamp out violent unrest.

ITAR-TASS News Agency reported fierce clashes overnight in the northern Caucasus, where dozens of people were killed in weekend fighting between Ossetians and Ingushis.

It said Russian Interior Ministry troops, paratroopers and militia had intervened to halt the clashes, which violated a two-day-old truce, and a state of emergency imposed Monday by President Boris Yeltsin.

The one-month state of emergency bans strikes and demonstrations, orders the confiscation of weapons and tightens control on broadcasting and publishing.

Interfax News Agency said 10 members of the Russian army and Interior Ministry Forces had been killed so far in the worst unrest to break out in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Yeltsin's tough measures were denounced as "a very dangerous manoeuvre" by Dzhokar Dudayev, leader of the neighbouring region of Chechnya which declared independence from Moscow a year ago and has been a persistent thorn in the president's side.

Mr. Yeltsin's decree "confirms the falseness of the Russian leadership's policy and the colonial character of the federative treaty," he said in reference to an accord between Moscow and a score of ethnic regions, which Chechnya has refused to sign.

Gen. Dudayev said he was

willing to mediate between the opposing sides, but warned ominously that Chechens would "go to help their (Ingush) brothers, and weapons will make their way there."

He reiterated earlier appeals for a union of Caucasian peoples on the basis of full independence from Moscow.

The head of Chechnya's Information Department, Movladi Udogov, accused Russian and Ossetian forces of massacring the civilian Ingush population and said there were hundreds of victims. There was no independent confirmation of the charge.

The Caucasus, subdued by Russia in the 19th century after decades of fighting, is a mountainous region inhabited by dozens of ethnic groups and divided by often arbitrary borders.

If the unrest spreads, it could pose a severe challenge to Mr. Yeltsin's authority.

TASS said North Ossetian parliamentary leader Akhsarbek Galazov would hold talks with Mr. Yeltsin in the Kremlin. A special plane was flying from Moscow to the region with emergency medical aid.

Up to 1,500 Ingush refugees, mainly women and children, had taken refuge at one Russian military base, TASS added.

Ingushis, who number about 100,000, claim parts of North Ossetia from which they were deported by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin in 1944 for alleged collaboration with Nazi Germany.

They say their claim is strengthened by a 1991 Russian law on rehabilitating "repressed peoples" and returning land confiscated from them during the Soviet era.

An Ingush official, Ibrahim Kostoyev, told Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper that the latest unrest followed a string of unpunished murders of Ingushis in the disputed region which led to a spontaneous outpouring of anger.

Meanwhile, confrontation between Russia and Georgia loomed Tuesday as their forces traded accusations over the seizure of a Russian ammunition dump by Georgian government troops.

A spokesman for the Russian military in the Transcaucasian state said the dump in the western town of Akhalsikhe had not yet been handed back by the Georgians despite an agreement reached Monday.

"A deliberate anti-Russian policy is being pursued by Georgia," Colonel Vasily Belchenko told a news conference in the capital Tbilisi.

He said Russian troops were ready to take action to free the dump. Col. Belchenko's words were given menacing weight by remarks of the Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev on Commonwealth Television Monday night.

"If talks fail to bring positive results I have no choice but to take a decision to unblock the dump using troops — aviation, tanks, artillery and infantry," Mr. Grachev said.

Georgia's leadership was split over the seizure of the huge arms dump, which ITAR-TASS News Agency said was taken after the capture of five Russian hostages Sunday.

Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze condemned the action Monday, saying those responsible were "playing with fire."

But Defence Minister Tengiz

Kitovani told local television the dump was seized on his personal orders. He accused commanders of the former Soviet troops of selling arms and ammunition from the dump.

"All this belongs to Georgia and we will not allow all this out of the republic," local journalists quoted him as saying.

Georgian officials have repeatedly accused the Russian military of supplying arms to rebels in Abkhazia, where hundreds of people have been killed since August in fighting between loyalist troops and Abkhazians separatists.

Moscow denies the charges and says its troops remain neutral. But the conflict over the dump may change its position.

Col. Belchenko said the number of attacks on Russian officers in Georgia was rapidly growing. An air force officer was beaten up in Tbilisi Monday in the presence of local military police officials.

He said the army was ready to defend itself, adding: "Our patience has its limits."

In a separate development, Russian troops have stepped in to maintain a curfew in the Tajik capital Dushanbe after fierce fighting in the Central Asian state in recent weeks, ITAR-TASS News Agency said Tuesday.

"Russian troops have been fully in charge of maintaining the curfew in Dushanbe since it was first imposed," TASS quoted a senior Russian military officer as saying.

TASS said the Russian troops had erected road blocks outside Dushanbe and the television centre was under heavy guard. Shops were virtually empty and there was a chronic shortage of meat, eggs, fruit and other staple foods.



The video-grabbed picture of Luanda TV shows prisoners of the National Union for Total Independence of Angola sitting on a truck following their arrest during fighting in the Angolan capital (AFP photo)

Angolan ceasefire holds as parties discuss prisoner swap

LISBON (R) — Sporadic shots broke the calm that has returned to the Angolan capital Luanda after four days of bloody conflict between the government and the former rebel group UNITA, Portuguese officials said Tuesday.

More than 1,000 people are reported to have died in the fighting in the former Portuguese colony.

Evacuated Portuguese arriving in Lisbon said that Luanda's residents who ventured out found some of the streets littered with bodies.

Police used an overnight curfew to disperse armed hands who carried out a brutal house-to-house manhunt for members of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA (Union for the Total Independence of Angola). UNITA's High Command has been dismantled.

But the United Nations and Portuguese government kept up behind-the-scenes efforts with the MPLA and UNITA to try to cement a fragile ceasefire, Portuguese officials said.

The ruling MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) and UNITA were holding secret negotiations to exchange prisoners "as a sign of good faith," they said.

Portuguese officials confirmed reports that two top UNITA officials — the movement's vice-president, Jeremias Chitunda,

and Salupeto Pena, Mr. Savimbi's nephew and right-hand man — had been killed, apparently while trying to flee the capital.

Portuguese radio reports said the MPLA announced the capture of 14 senior UNITA officials, including its military commander General Arlindo Pena "Ben-Ben" who was seriously wounded.

Broadcasts by Angolan National Radio called for calm and appealed to civilians loyal to the ruling MPLA not to vent their fury on UNITA members.

South African diplomats in a floating hotel off Luanda said there were unconfirmed reports of fighting still under way between government and UNITA troops in Viana and at least one other town, but the capital was calm.

"The situation is fairly controlled," said a Luanda resident contacted by TSF Radio. "There are no attacks."

There was no word from Mr. Savimbi, who has been holed up in Angola's second city of Huambo in the central Highlands since late October after he rejected the outcome of a U.N.-supervised September election which gave a landslide victory to the MPLA.

The influential Portuguese paper Publico attacked him for rejecting the election result, and criticised the MPLA for allowing

UNITA officials to be killed.

"Barbarism has returned to Angola," said a Publico editorial which warned that the country could slide back into civil war. "Stalinist and tribalist delirium has been imposed once more."

But many of the 130 people, mostly Portuguese, on the first evacuation plane to reach Lisbon said they hoped to return to Angola soon.

They were all in good health, though one 29-year-old Portuguese man said he was beaten and threatened by UNITA soldiers in Luanda who said they were looking for Cubans.

Cuba and the former Soviet Union backed the MPLA in the 16-year civil war against UNITA which ended last year with a ceasefire brokered by Portugal.

Mr. Savimbi was backed by the United States and South Africa.

In Pretoria, Foreign Ministry sources said they had received confirmation that General Arlindo Pena and General Paulo "Gato," one of Savimbi's most trusted aides, had been killed.

"It's quieted down and our people from the mission got off the boat and drove through (Luanda). There was a lot of devastation," one of the sources said.

"But there are reports of fighting to the north and east. You can hear the sound of mortars."

Commission rejects volunteer combat role for U.S. women

WASHINGTON (AP) — Female soldiers should not be given the option of volunteering for front-line duty if men don't have the same choice, says a presidential commission that is considering relaxing the military's ban on women in direct combat.

The 15-member Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces Monday rejected the notion of a so-called dual standard that would let women volunteer for combat while men are assigned to it involuntarily.

"The services should adopt gender-neutral assignment policies, providing for the possibility of involuntary assignment of any qualified personnel to any position open to them," the panel said.

But the sharply divided commission postponed until Tuesday votes on just how much the prohibitions on women in combat should be relaxed.

The Pentagon's policy now is to keep all women, who comprise about 11 per cent of the uniformed services, out of direct combat. A poll the panel commissioned from the Roper Organisation found that 57 per cent of the military favours continuing that policy, while 42 per cent oppose it.

Nonetheless, a narrow majority of commission members appeared headed toward endorsing an expanded role for women in air and sea combat missions, while continuing to keep them out of ground fighting situations.

Women would still be banned from frontline infantry, armour and artillery assignments but could get combat roles as part of fixed-wing and helicopter aircraft crews or on surface ships under proposals up for votes Tuesday.

Congress last year repealed legal restrictions on assigning women to combat aircraft, but it established the commission to examine the impact of assigning them to combat roles there and at sea and on the ground as well.

After holding hearings for seven months and spending some \$4 million, the panel is drafting its final, non-binding recommendations for submission to President George Bush on Nov. 15.

The panel Monday rejected proposals to establish military-wide, gender-related quotas and goals for recruiting, promotions and assignments.

Instead, it said the Secretary of Defence should have discretion to set goals to optimise the use of women while ensuring that positions open to both sexes are filled by the best qualified people regardless of gender.

Bosnian Serbs deliver walkout threat in Geneva

GENEVA (R) — Bosnia's Serbs Tuesday warned international mediators that they might walk out of peace talks discussed.

Senior Serb official Nikola Koljevic handed over a copy of a decision by the insurgents' parliament containing the pull-out threat at a meeting with the mediators, a spokesman for the Geneva conference on ex-Yugoslavia said.

But conference co-chairmen Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen would not react until Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic came to Geneva "and makes the situation crystal clear," the spokesman, Derek Boothby, said.

Diplomats said the wording of the decision left open the possibility that the Serbs would stay in as long as a draft constitution for Bosnia proposed by Mr. Vance and Lord Owen last week was not the only basis for further discussion.

But the diplomats said the threat of withdrawal coupled with clear signs of increased militancy by Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia and by Serb nationalists in the ramp Yugoslavia did not bode well for the future of the two-month-old conference.

"There is a growing feeling that the Serbs across former Yugoslavia have decided that the time has come to create their 'greater Serbia' and to hell with what the world thinks," said one diplomat close to the conference.

Mr. Koljevic, head of the Serb

delegation to the conference and vice-president of the self-proclaimed Serb Republic of Bosnia, made no comment as he went into the meeting with Mr. Vance and Marti Ahtisaari who chairs the working group on Bosnia.

But conference diplomats said his appearance suggested the Serbs, clearly in a triumphant mood after new military successes, were not planning to challenge the international community immediately by staging a dramatic walkout.

On Monday, the Yugoslav agency Tanjug and the Serbs' own news service reported that the Bosnian Serbs' parliament had voted to leave the Bosnia working group unless their republic was formally recognised by the mediators.

Chief conference spokesman Fred Eckhard said earlier Mr. Vance and Lord Owen excluded such recognition and that it would not be accepted by the UN Security Council.

The two mediators reject division of Bosnia-Herzegovina into ethnic entities for its Slav Muslim, Serb and Croat communities and last week proposed a constitution that would create seven to 10 regions shaped mainly on economic grounds.

Diplomatic sources close to the conference said Mr. Vance and Lord Owen saw the withdrawal warning as part of a pattern of defiance by Bosnian Serbs and hardliners in Serbia itself that has emerged over the past few days.

32 killed as rebels ambush Sri Lanka patrol

COLOMBO (R) — Twenty-three servicemen and nine rebels were killed Tuesday when Tamil separatist guerrillas ambushed a patrol in eastern Sri Lanka, police and army sources said.

A helicopter gunship, armoured cars and about 500 troops were rushed to reinforce the patrol, which was surprised by about 100 rebels near Arantalawa in the eastern Ampara district, a senior army officer said.

The patrol was searching for road mines when they were surrounded by the rebels, police said. They said 13 soldiers and 10 policemen were killed.

The bodies of nine rebels from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who are fighting for a separate state in the island's north and east, were recovered after a one-hour battle, the officer said.

The rebels sprang the ambush as the 40-man joint air force-police patrol searched for mines at about 8:30 a.m. (0300 GMT), the officer said.

Previous reports said the fighting raged for about three hours and about 400 rebels took part.

In Colombo, the military gave the death toll as 20 servicemen — nine airmen, nine policemen and two soldiers from the paramilitary National Guard Battalion.

Military sources said the patrol had been on a daily road-clearing operation and their movements would probably have been monitored by the Tigers for some time.

Irish coalition partners step back from brink

DUBLIN (R) — The Progressive Democrats, junior partners in Ireland's shaky ruling coalition, Tuesday stepped back from the brink and delayed any decision about withdrawing from government for 48 hours.

Their surprise announcement gave Prime Minister Albert Reynolds's government a dramatic last-minute reprieve and spared Ireland, at least for the moment, from a snap general election.

Industry Minister Desmond O'Malley, leader of the Progressive Democrats, said in a statement he had delayed his decision until Thursday to permit investigation of accusations of dishonesty against him by Mr. Reynolds.

Mr. Reynolds had accused Mr. O'Malley of being "reckless, irresponsible and dishonest" in his testimony to a tribunal probing malpractice allegations in Ireland's troubled beef industry.

Mr. O'Malley said he had decided to postpone his decision because "tomorrow the chairman of the beef tribunal will hold a special investigation into allegations that I deliberately misled the tribunal while giving evidence under oath."

Mr. Reynolds, who started the day with a bottle of champagne to celebrate his 60th birthday, told reporters: "An election, if it occurs, would be utterly unnecessary."

"There is so much uncertainty and instability out there. This is a time when we need strong leadership."

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"There is so much uncertainty and instability out there. This is a time when we need strong leadership."

Cameroon president calls for 'great debate'

YAOUNDE (R) — Cameroon's President Paul Biya, sworn in for his third term Tuesday, called for a "great national debate" to be held to discuss major changes to the constitution.

African leaders afraid of being stripped of their prerogatives by

national conferences with sovereign powers have in the past, opted for national debates as a less threatening alternative.

Gen. Biya has always opposed a sovereign national conference on political reform, saying it would amount to a civil coup d'état.

Australian government may call December poll

CANBERRA (R) — The Australian government is considering calling a snap election for Dec. 12, senior government sources said Tuesday.

Many of the Labour government's members of parliament think the party's chances will never be better and sources said Prime Minister Paul Keating, who will make the final decision, raised the possibility in a recent cabinet meeting.

"The caucus is split 50-50 on it," a senior source said.

Strong polls and the recent emergence of good campaign issues are the arguments in favour of a December poll.

A weak although strengthening economy and the fact that the government would still have to pick up votes during the campaign period are the reasons for waiting.

Dec. 12 is the last practical 1992 election date because school holidays cover the period from when until February. The election must be held by May and on a Saturday.

Dec. 12 is also the first available day because Mr. Keating must give 33 clear days notice of the election.

That rules out Dec. 5 and means that a Dec. 12 poll would have to be called by next Monday.

The government's performance in recent opinion polls is not good enough to pull off a win but, according to the sources, it may put it within striking distance.

"We were pessimistic about winning earlier in the year but at this stage we're in with a chance," said one source.

The Bulletin magazine's Morgan-Gallup Poll taken on Oct. 17 and 24 put the government's support at 40.5 per cent, little changed on the 41 per cent measured earlier in the month.

Support for the Liberal-National Party opposition was unchanged at 44 per cent.

The Oct. 28 and 29 Saulwick Poll, published in the Sydney Morning Herald and Melbourne's Age newspaper, found government support at 40 per cent, up

three percentage points on a month before. Opposition support was 43 per cent, down five.

The government won the last election, in March 1990, with only 39.4 per cent of the vote.

It won a majority of House of Representatives seats only after the complex preferential voting system redistributed the votes of smaller parties.

But support for smaller parties has since collapsed, so there will be fewer seats to redistribute this time.

Electoral boundary changes have also disadvantaged Labour.

Political analysts say the government will probably need 45 per cent support to win the coming election. The government holds 77 seats the 148-seat lower house and the Conservative coalition has 69. There are two independents.

But the sources noted that Australian governments usually make up ground during an election campaign — often five percentage points. Labour Party sources said Mr. Keating, a

powerful campaigner, would probably better the average.

Mr. Keating also has in his hands a fresh campaign issue — the opposition's new free-market industrial policy which was politically damaged just last week by the savage implementation of a similar policy in the state of Victoria.

Victoria's new Liberal-National government abolished extra pay for weekend work and cancelled the holiday bonuses that Australian workers are accustomed to.

The state government's decision to simultaneously grant itself pay rises also damaged the Liberal-National image.

Opposition treasury spokesman Peter Reith said Tuesday the parliament was full of rumours of a Dec. 12 election to extricate treasurer John Dawkins from a damaging inquiry into unauthorised borrowing by Victoria's former Labour government.

Mr. Dawkins is alleged to have kept the extra borrowing quiet

German police recover 16th-century Cranach painting

BERLIN (R) — Police recovered eight paintings of 16th-century German master Martin Cranach the elder, stolen from a Weimar museum since World War II. The Interior Ministry in many's Thuringia state said four suspects were arrested after the discovery of the paintings and 19 other stolen works in the northwestern Northem. Experts put the value of the eight paintings Cranach and associates million marks (\$400 million). Among the Cranach works on Oct. 12 from Weimar, a portrait of church reformer Martin Luther worth some 133 marks (\$9.5 million) alone. Investigators said earlier the works had been carried out by private acting on orders from noting the fact that two works by Cranach's contemporary Albrecht Dürer were untouched in a nearby room.

BBC TV launches first trans-Atlantic service

LONDON (AP) — The Broadcasting Corp.'s World Television plans to launch its first trans-Atlantic service into the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific in the next 14 months, chief said Monday. Chief executive Christopher Irwin said the company was on course to achieve its goal of wide transmissions by the end of the year. "We are midway through a period of rapid expansion, but we put our news and information channel within the potentially 85 per cent of the world's population," Mr. Irwin said. WSTV Monday launched its first trans-Atlantic service transmissions to Canadian Broadcast Corporation's Channel and on its Network. WSTV was founded in March 1991 as a wholly BBC subsidiary. It is a funding commercial which is funded mainly by advertising and subscriptions. It receives no government money.

Last animal dies in Sarajevo Zoo

SARAJEVO (R) — The last animal in Sarajevo Zoo, a bear, has died of starvation, took him some bread, he last Wednesday, but he was weak to eat them, he said next day. "I was sad to see after all these months, but his suffering is over. He survived longer than any animal in captivity at the Bosnian capital, under for seven months, by eating other bears which shared in the cage is just 100 metres the lines of Sarajevo's Serb lines. Zoo workers in furs, eagles and wolves months ago.

Nearly 1 of 5 new cars perform poorly in crash tests

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new passenger vehicle offered serious head injury risk in nearly one of five new cars that the government tested in head-on crash tests to test results released Tuesday. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration results were based on 71 of all 1993 model designs underwent a 35-mile-per-hour head-on crash into a barrier. Nearly 100 new 1993 model cars were tested in the coming weeks. The tests showed that 15 of the cars tested would have caused serious head injuries as a result of the impact of a seat belt other cars tested, the results would have escaped without serious injuries, although of those cases the front seaters might have suffered injuries, the agency